



CITY OF MADISON

1004 Madison Avenue • P.O. Box 40 • Madison, Mississippi 39130-0040 • (601) 856-7116

February 28, 2000

Surface Transportation Board
Attention: Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
1925 K Street, N.W.,
Washington, D.C., 20423-0001

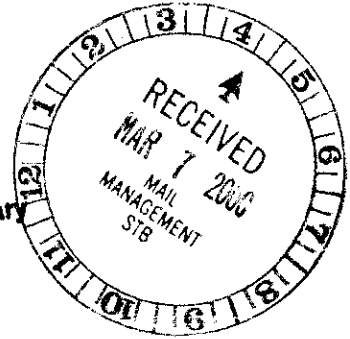
Dear Sir:

Re: Ex Parte 582

ENTERED
Office of the Secretary

MAR 15 2000

Part of
Public Record



Mayor
Mary Hawkins-Butler

Board of Aldermen

At Large
Lisa Clingan-Smith

Ward I
Tawanna Tatum

Ward II
Patricia H. Peeler

Ward III
Donna Yowell

Ward IV
Steve Hickok

I am writing on behalf of the City of Madison, Mississippi, and our 15,000 residents, to share with the Board our perspective of the importance of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and the Canadian National Railway System merger.

The Illinois Central Railroad runs through Madison and has always been a good corporate citizen. We are fortunate to have a railroad which has played a large part in our heritage and tradition. I understand the railroad is now part of the Canadian National Railway system. The presence of our railroad has been a valuable factor for businesses when they consider locating in our area.

We know that a financially healthy and dependable rail system is essential to the wellbeing of our City, our State and the Nation. We support the decision of the Surface Transportation Board to consider the future structure of the rail industry. Given the importance of the rail service for jobs and industry in our area, we respectfully request that the Board not to take any steps which would delay the consideration of the application by Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Canadian National Railway Company to combine their two companies. That combination, we believe, should be considered solely on its merits and should not have to be viewed on the basis of what other railroads might do or not do in the future.

We are above all concerned about the health and well being of all the industries operating in our area, including the railroad. We believe that a healthy, competitive railroad industry is best for all of us, not only here in Madison, but throughout the State and North America.

We strongly support the board's allowing BN and CN to make their application and to tell their story, just as the other railroads did when they merged, and letting the positive solution brought about by their merger guide your decision. We would respectfully hope that you reject any reason to delay your reviewing process of that application.

I appreciate your kind consideration of Madison's point of view, as your decision will greatly affect the future of our City, State and Nation.

Sincerely,

Mary Hawkins-Butler
Mayor, City of Madison